

### Remarks

This response is submitted concurrently with a request for continued examination, a petition for two month extension, and the required official fees.

Applicant requests continued examination with respect to claims that are narrowed to define specifically that the outer surface of the union nut is flush with and longitudinally extends the handgrip. This amendment advances prosecution.

As discussed in the specification, a hand shower on the end of a shower hose has been found to be particularly efficient if dimensioned in a certain way, and is further improved by structuring the union nut that couples the handgrip to the shower hose as an extension that longitudinally continues the handgrip.

The prior art of record, in particular US 6,641,057 – Thomas, as applied in the latest official action, does not have a structure wherein the union nut (Thomas part 156) extends flush with the outer surface of the handgrip (Thomas part 46 or 56) over the length of the union nut.

Claim 1 defines that the union nut on the end of the shower hose has an outer surface that is flush with an outer surface of the handgrip, over the longitudinal length of the union nut, such that the outer surface of the handgrip longitudinally is extended by the outer surface of the union nut flush therewith. No new matter is presented. The disclosure provides that the union nut, attached to the end of the shower hose, forms an extension of the handgrip, the longitudinal dimension of the union nut thereby adding to that of the handgrip. See for example page 3, lines 3-11 (paragraph [0015] as published). The specification states that the outer surface of the union nut is flush with the outer surface of the handgrip. See for example page 4, lines 16-17 (paragraph [0022]).

New drawings were required in response to the official action. According to the official action, the original drawings lack a sufficient illustration of the subject matter of claim 1 wherein the union nut is defined to have an outer surface that is flush with the outer surface of the handgrip. The examiner opines that the disclosure is silent with respect to which outer surfaces are involved, and

accordingly the outer surfaces might be the axial ends of the handgrip and the union nut.

New drawings are submitted. Reconsideration is requested. No new matter is presented.

The disclosure is not in fact silent as to the surfaces that are flush, namely the outer surfaces of the handgrip and the union nut, respectively, which extend one another longitudinally. The outer surface of the handgrip is described as extending the outer surface of the handgrip, which would not be the case if the claimed outer surfaces were axial ends, as suggested by the examiner to be a possible construction of the claim language.

Page 3 line 10 expressly states the that extension of the handgrip and the union nut is longitudinal. This aspect is particularly stated in the claims. There is no basis to assert that the defined flush surfaces, of the union nut and/or the handgrip, might be abutting axial end faces. The only interpretation that is consistent with the description and drawings, and as particularly claimed, is that the outer diametrical surfaces of the handgrip correspond and align with the outer diametrical surfaces of the union nut, such that the union nut longitudinally extends the same size and shape as the handgrip.

Regarding depiction of the invention in the drawings, applicant proposes to amend Fig. 1 by adding a solid line arrow parallel the longitudinal direction of the handgrip 4 and a dashed-line arrow that extends in the same longitudinal direction, thus adding the length of the union nut 6 shown flush with the handgrip. The subject matter of the claim is illustrated without introduction of new matter because the specification states that the flush outer surface of the union nut longitudinally extends the outer surface of the handgrip.

US 6,641,057 – Thomas does not teach or suggest the subject matter claimed as a whole. Figs. 3 and 6B of Thomas show a union nut 156 that is not flush with the outer surface of the handgrip 56. The outer surface of the Thomas union nut does not even correspond with the outer surface of the handgrip where

the union nut abuts the handgrip. Fig. 6B shows a smooth outer handgrip surface that plugs into the union nut. The Thomas union nut is diametrically larger than the handgrip, as opposed to flush as claimed.

Fig. 3 of Thomas shows plainly that union nut 156 is larger than the outer surface of the handle 46 or 56. The union nut has a larger diameter than the handgrip at the point of abutment with the handgrip, and the diameter of the Thomas union nut is even larger than that, proceeding along the length of the union nut. There is no basis to assert that the surfaces of the union nut and the handgrip are flush. The Thomas union nut has a conical shape that flares from a diameter slightly larger than the handgrip where the handgrip plugs into the union nut, up to a maximum diameter that is about a third larger than the diameter of the handgrip.

The Thomas structure with a conical flaring union nut shape might be useful in some way, for example providing the user with a tactile point of reference or fitting between the fingers in a way that prevents longitudinal slippage when grasping the shower head assembly. However applicant's invention is different. There is no basis to say that Thomas discloses applicant's invention defined in claim 1 wherein the outer surfaces of the handgrip and the union nut are flush over their length.

Claim 1 has been amended so that it is not possible to assume that axially abutting faces might be considered flush outer surfaces. Nor is it possible to find the claimed subject matter in a smaller diameter annular part of a union nut when in fact the union nut flares in a conical shape. Those interpretations are not consistent with the amended claim language as a whole.

The Thomas disclosure does not meet the invention of amended claim 1 as a whole. Whereas Thomas fails to provide any incentive for a reconfiguration, there is no basis to say that Thomas makes a flush union nut structure obvious. No other prior art reference has been cited that discloses or suggests a handgrip and union nut structure with outer surfaces that are flush and continue over the length of a union nut. This structure is supported by an enabling disclosure and is illustrated in the drawings. The structure is particularly and distinctly claimed. Therefore, claim 1

is properly allowable. Claims 2 and 5-7 depend from claim 1 and are allowable at least by dependence.

Claim 6 was rejected over a combination of Thomas and DE 19942853 – Schiller, the latter being cited for an oval shape of the shower head spray portion. Applicant agrees that Schiller has an oval spray head. However neither Schiller nor Thomas, nor their combination, discloses or suggests a shower arrangement that is otherwise as claimed, wherein the union nut on the end of the shower hose has an outer surface that is flush with an outer surface of the handgrip, over the longitudinal length of the union nut, such that the outer surface of the handgrip longitudinally is extended by the outer surface of the union nut flush therewith.

The invention claimed as a whole is not disclosed in the prior art of record. The differences between the invention and the prior art are such that the subject matter claimed as a whole is not shown to have been obvious.

Allowance of claims 1, 2 and 5-7 is appropriate and is now requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: April 6, 2007

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Docket Nos. D4700-380  
P42416US

Exhibit - Annotation showing  
changes made in Fig. 1

